

TEN TIPS TO AUTO REPAIR HAPPINESS

**By Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo
& Assemblywoman Jenny Oropesa (D-Long Beach)**

1. FIND THE DISPLAY OR RUN AWAY

All automotive repair facilities must be registered with the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) and display its certificate of registration.

2. LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Contact the BAR and the Better Business Bureau for complaints and disciplinary history.

3. TRAINING COUNTS

You're not driving your father's car. Repairs today involve computer technology. Parts are expensive. Mechanics, however, are not required by law to be trained or certified. Ask whether the shop requires their mechanics to be certified (such as Automotive Service Excellence) or acquire other advanced training.

4. START SMALL

Test the shop on small repairs. If the mechanic says you need major repairs, get a second opinion.

5. GET A SECOND OPINION

Think of your auto repair shop as your car's doctor. For major surgery on your car, get a second opinion.

6. WRITTEN ESTIMATES ARE A MUST

If a shop does not give you a written estimate, don't give them your car. By law, repairs cannot be made before the consumer gets a written estimate for parts and labor.

7. IF IT LOOKS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE ... IT PROBABLY IS.

Lowball estimates may mean fraud. It costs money to train mechanics, modernize equipment and to purchase parts. Be careful.

8. YOU CAN'T BE CHARGED MORE UNLESS YOU AGREED FIRST

It is illegal to perform any repair without prior authorization of the customer.

9. READ THE FINAL INVOICE

The final invoice must reflect the shop's name, registration number, all work itemized and parts identified, and whether you verbally authorized work in excess of the original written estimate.

10. KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

For more detailed information, call the BAR at (800) 952-5210 or visit its web site at www.dca.ca.gov.